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Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 21 September 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward herewith the Zagreb Declaration, adopted by the Parliamentary Summit of the countries participating in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, held from 11 to 13 September 2000 in Zagreb (see annex).

I should like to request your kind assistance in circulating the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 67 (b), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ivan **Šimonović**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia

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Annex to the letter dated 21 September 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia addressed to the Secretary-General

Zagreb Declaration

1. We, the participants of this Summit, welcome the organisation of the conference of parliament speakers and presidents of all Stability Pact subjects by the Croatian National Parliament – Hrvatski drzavni sabor, at a time when significant democratic changes are taking place in Croatia. These developments should be strengthened by further concrete actions within the context of the Stability Pact.

2. One year after the Sarajevo Summit Declaration of the Heads of State and Government, we on our part are determined to provide continued support to the Stability Pact process. We commit ourselves to expanding parliamentary cooperation and working with respective executive branches, civil society institutions and the public at large in our countries in promoting the use of the Pact to achieve long-term stability of the European continent.

3. Parliamentarians in every democracy have a decisive influence on the overall democratic processes. We note that this Summit is held at a moment of global parliamentary efforts, such as the United Nations Millennium Assembly. In addition, other relevant parliamentary fora, including the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), West European Union (WEU) all aspire to address the main challenges facing our world community. Security and prosperity of the global community depends on the security and prosperity of individual regions and countries. It is imperative to resolve problems in that part of the European continent, which in the last decade has witnessed a level of human suffering that should be unacceptable in the world today.

4. We endorse the goal of those countries of South Eastern Europe who wish to do so, to become fully integrated into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, and believe that the Stability Pact and the implementation of its objectives within such a regional framework will significantly contribute to the process of the creation of an undivided Europe of secure, economically prosperous democracies, which is the ultimate goal of the Stability Pact.

5. Therefore, we affirm the importance of the provisions of Article 8 of the Cologne Document, which clearly sets out the parameters for the integration of South Eastern European countries into the European Union on an individual basis and their commitment to continued democratic and economic reforms, as well as bilateral and regional cooperation among themselves. In this context we welcome the progress achieved by the countries in the region in developing institutionalised relations with the European Union and look forward to the early conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreements. The Decision of the European Council in Santa Maria da Feira which stated that all countries included in the Stabilisation and Association Process are potential candidates for European Union membership is particularly important.

6. We encourage the countries of the region to use and realise the full potential of the Stability Pact process as they advance towards European integration. We further call on all Stability Pact subjects, particularly in South Eastern Europe, to establish a true partnership with other Stability Pact participants, facilitators and observers.

7. We note the high expectations of the peoples and governments in the region for the implementation of the Stability Pact, particularly in important areas such as the development of transport infrastructure, communications, energy supplies and waterways, in particular the Danube waterway, as well as creating a favourable foreign investment climate and enhancing regional trade liberalisation. Those are essential for the economic development of the countries concerned and of South Eastern Europe as a whole. We stress that any efforts in the field of economy would be incomplete without similar progress in building a society based on democratic values, the rule of law, respect for human rights, including those of members of national minorities, cultural diversity and tolerance. Education and cultural co-operation are powerful means of creating a climate of tolerance and mutual understanding. Competent parliaments are encouraged to commit themselves to fostering dialogue with and among schools and universities in their countries to promote educational projects in the field of history and related subject matters, also by an appropriate use of IT resources. We note that the Stability Pact is a two way street and encourage our governments to intensify efforts towards reform to strengthen open democracies, viable market economies and social stability within the region.

8. We underline the importance of the regional refugee return programme as the prerequisite for long term stability. This requires political will and financial commitment by all concerned if the regional return process is to succeed.

9. It is essential to implement the Quick Start Package in a timely manner, as agreed during the Regional Funding Conference for South Eastern Europe held in Brussels, March 29-30, 2000. This would significantly strengthen the entire process, which has so far received important international political support.

10. We encourage the active interest, support and participation of parliamentary institutions in the Stability Pact and the achievement of its objectives. The work of national parliaments, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO, WEU and the parliamentary dimension of Central European Initiative (CEI) and Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC) should actively promote Stability Pact goals. In this context, we appreciate the activities of the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEECP) which has been developing into an important co-operation initiative of the participating countries in the region with potential to promote good-neighbourly relations, co-operation, peace and stability in South Eastern Europe.

11. The situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) continues to cause serious concern, in particular to its neighbouring countries, but also to the international community. We confirm the validity of the provisions of the Cologne Document concerning the FRY participation in the Stability Pact, as stated in its Article 11. A democratic FRY will be welcome to join the Stability Pact process. Therefore, we express our strong support to all democratic forces in the FRY. In particular, we support the involvement of the democratic forces in the activities of the Stability Pact, including the Szeged Process. In this context we support the democratically elected government in Montenegro in its efforts to promote democracy, peace and stability in the region. We reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and urge all in Kosovo to refrain from violence and to help build a democratic and multi-ethnic society where human rights, including those of members of national minorities, are respected.

12. We note the important work carried out so far on encouraging the parliamentary cooperation in the context of the Stability Pact. We also note the Final Declaration from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted at the Conference on the Parliamentary Contributions to the Implementation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (Sofia, November 26, 1999). The "Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Co-operation in South-Eastern Europe" adopted last February in Bucharest by Heads of State/Government of the SEECP countries, constitutes a major contribution to the strengthening of co-operation and stability in the region. The Action Plan, elaborated by the International Institute for Democracy, as adopted by the Chairmen of Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committees in Ohrid in April 1999, is an important mechanism for providing both members and parliamentary staff information, knowledge and skills on topics relevant to their work and enhancing multilateral co-operation between the parliaments, in particular young members of parliament and women parliamentarians.

13. It is also important that multilateral meetings among the parliaments concerned take place at regular intervals with the aim of exchanging experiences on the implementation and setting priorities in the region. The European Parliament and national parliaments of the European Union member states need to continue holding debates on the implementation of the Stability Pact in order to ensure timely spending and proper use of financial resources made available for the countries of South Eastern Europe. The parliaments in the countries of South Eastern Europe should consider establishing appropriate parliamentary sub-committees for the Stability Pact. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the Stability Pact the parliaments should provide all necessary tools for the simplification of legislation and the fight against corruption, organised crime and international terrorism.

14. Parliaments are invited to play a role in identifying the criteria for selecting priorities, fostering inter-institutional co-ordination and monitoring progress in projects not only by performing an effective control function but also by providing guidance for their respective executive bodies.

15. We, the parliamentarians, support our national governments in the implementation of the Stability Pact objectives. Only policies based on a clear vision of the future can bring democratic prosperity for Southeast Europe and beyond. At the dawn of the third millennium we gather our voices in advocating the leadership that will make the idea of an undivided and free greater Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals a reality for every citizen of Europe.

Addendum to the Declaration

The parliamentary delegations of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden confirm their support to the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and express their readiness to fully participate in the activities leading to its implementation. Due to constitutional/institutional practice of their countries, these delegations are not considered to be party to the Zagreb Declaration as adopted by the Parliamentary Summit.